

What is claimed is:

1. A personal computer system comprising:
  - a plurality of audio digital-to-analog converters; and
  - a controller configured to receive digital audio signals from multiple sources and route the digital audio signals to a selected digital-to-analog converter based on a desired converter quality.
2. A personal computer system comprising:
  - one or more standard digital audio sources;
  - one or more high quality digital audio sources;
  - means for routing digital audio signals from standard digital audio sources to a standard quality digital-to-analog converter; and
  - means for routing digital audio signals from a high-quality digital audio source to a high quality digital-to-analog converter.
3. The personal computer system of claim 2 where any of the high quality or standard quality digital-to-analog converters are coder-decoders (CODECs) that contain both digital-to-analog converters and analog-to-digital converters.
4. The personal computer system of claim 1 where a user configures the controller such that the controller assigns a digital-to analog converter and a priority to each of the plurality of audio sources, and the controller routes the digital audio signal with the highest priority for each of the digital-to-analog converters to its assigned digital-to-analog converter.
5. The personal computer system of claim 1 where a user configures the controller by hardware or software controls, such that the controller routes a selected analog signal to a selected one of a plurality of analog outputs.

09186617-110598

6. The personal computer system of claim 5 where the selected analog signal is provided by one of a group consisting of the digital-to-analog converters, Compact Disc players, DVD players, microphones, TV tuners, or analog inputs.
7. The personal computer system of claim 1, further comprising a standard personal computer bus for transferring the digital audio signal from the digital audio source to the controller.
8. The personal computer system of claim 1 where the digital audio signal is transferred from the digital audio source to the controller by a direct electrical or optical connection between the two.
9. A method of routing digital audio to a plurality of digital-to-analog converters in a personal computer comprising the steps of:
  - receiving digital audio data from one of a plurality of digital audio sources; and
  - routing the digital audio data to one of a plurality of converters based on desired converter quality.
10. The method of claim 9 and further comprising the steps of:
  - assigning digital audio data from each source a priority;
  - assigning digital audio data from each source to one of the plurality of converters;
  - determining which digital audio data has the highest priority among all data assigned to each converter; and
  - converting the digital audio data in each converter with the highest priority to analog audio.
11. A method of routing digital audio to a plurality of audio digital-to-analog converters in a personal computer comprising the steps of:

receiving digital audio from one of a plurality of digital audio sources;  
assigning digital audio data from each source a priority; and  
routing the digital audio data to one of a plurality of converters in an order  
determined by the assigned data priority.

12. A personal computer system comprising:

memory;  
a processor;  
a bus;  
a plurality of digital audio converters; and  
a controller configured to receive digital audio signals from multiple sources and  
route the digital audio signals to a selected digital-to-analog converter based on  
desired converter quality.

13. A method of routing digital audio signals in a personal computer comprising the  
steps of:

routing digital audio signals from standard digital audio sources to a standard  
quality digital-to-analog converter; and  
routing digital audio signals from high-quality audio sources to a high-quality  
digital-to-analog converter.

09186817 110598